

## **Language Vitality in Macuxi and Wapixana in Terra Indígena Serra da Lua, Roraima**

**Abstract:** This presentation will focus on my upcoming fieldwork on language vitality of the Macuxi and Wapixana languages in Terra Indígena Serra Da Lua, Roraima. Macuxi (Carib) and Wapixana (Arawak) are indigenous languages spoken in Roraima, Brazil, as well as English Guyana. Due to the proximity of the border of English Guyana, Roraima presents an interesting multilingual situation, where English, Portuguese, Macuxi, and Wapixana are all spoken. I will be conducting structured interviews with members of mixed Wapixana-Macuxi villages, where there are indigenous speakers of both Portuguese and English. In this presentation, I will review previous sociolinguistic evaluations of Macuxi and Wapixana speech communities, as well as other relevant literature. I will present the questionnaire and methodology that I will be using, and the rationale for some of the questions.

Both Wapixana and Macuxi communities in Brazil have been experiencing dramatic language shift towards Portuguese and English (Pearson & Amaral 2014; Beaton 1994). My questionnaire asks similar questions as previous studies, seeking to understand who uses which language and in what situation (Fishman 1965). However, previous sociolinguistic evaluations do not focus on multilingualism between indigenous languages, or with English. Thus, the questionnaire will aim to ask explicitly about perceptions and knowledge of indigenous languages other than the speaker's mother-tongue language. The questionnaire also asks about newer domains of communications, namely, the Internet, which older studies have not done.

Brazil has also been experiencing a period of rapid economic growth that has created conditions of economic migration for indigenous peoples. Young indigenous people very often seek work outside of the community (Melo 2012). The questionnaire aims to determine how migration affects ethnic identity, and its effects on language use, following Ferri's similar study in 1990.

Lastly, I will review recent literature on indigenous schools in Roraima (Santos 2012; Freitas 2003), and present a second questionnaire, aimed at indigenous teachers of Macuxi and Wapixana. The questionnaire focuses on experiences of teaching indigenous languages, as well as Portuguese and English. It hopes to help identify what resources can be used to improve the teaching (and thus, maintenance) of Macuxi and Wapixana.